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ABSTRACT

This journal issue deals with training teachers of reading. The four articles discuss a summer reading methods practicum that worked, how students rate their reading instructors, how reading consultants can survive school politics, and college students' perceptions of the fairness and the difficulty of examinations. (FL)

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[Training Teachers of Reading]

EPISTLE

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PUBLICATION FORUM FOR PROFESSORS OF READING TEACHER EDUCATORS: A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

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EPISTLE is the publication forum of the Professors of Reading Teacher Educators Special Interest Group of the International Reading Association. Membership in PRTE is $6.00 per year and includes quarterly issues of EPISTLE. Additional copies of EPISTLE are available for $1.50 to members and $2.00 to non-members.

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EPISTLE

Natchitoches, Louisiana
Summer 1978

Dear Colleagues:

Another annual meeting of PRTE was held in Houston at the IRA Convention. The business meeting included reports that membership renewals and new members are coming in slowly for 1978, and that EPISTLE will be back on schedule as of this issue. It is! Another development was the announcement by the chairman, yours truly, that he has appointed a nomination and election committee to secure his replacement. After five years it seems long overdue. Also, revision of the IRA by-laws at the last convention presecribed a two-year term for special interest group chairmen. When we meet again in Atlanta it will have been two years since that regulation was established. Thus, I have asked to be replaced effective with the beginning of the 1979 membership year. The timing will allow the new chairman to prepare for and officiate at the 1979 meeting in May. I am willing to continue editing EPISTLE through the 1979 year, Volume VI. Whoever is elected to the chairmanship will have a year to arrange for a new editor. Due to his willingness and the fact that no length of tenure stipulation was placed on the Secretary/Treasurer position, Warren Wheelock will continue handling our money and membership records.

Once again let me use this space to encourage all members to assist in expanding the membership ranks. Use the membership form in this issue to encourage a faculty member peer or graduate student to join. Your help in this will allow for the maintenance of EPISTLE and all other services without an increase in the membership rate.

You are invited to assist in the selection of a new chairman for the special interest group. Send your nomination(s) to the committee chairman or contact other committee members. Send your suggestions to Dr. George E. Mason, 309 Aderhold Building, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602. Other members of the nomination and elections committee are Lee Mountain, Mildred Bailey, Jim Fleming, and Charles Peters. Nominations must be received by August 15, 1978. A ballot will be printed in the Fall issue of EPISTLE and announcement of the new chairman will be made in the Winter issue. Take part in this process to insure that the special interest group continues in a direction which is to your liking.

The Houston meeting included a program on liability aspects to reading professors and graduate program practices. A later issue of EPISTLE is planned to include papers from program participants and others on that topic. If you wish to address the topic in an article please contact the editor. The possibility of going to court in their own defense is an increasing likelihood for graduate program professors. We need to profit from the experiences of those who

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have had an advance taste of jurisprudence. Share your story and advice.

July and August are doctoral graduation months. Please use the forms at the center of this issue to let EPISTLE know what jobs your graduates secured. Also, if you or other veteran reading professors have moved tell EPISTLE so that we can publish your new address. Direct this information to the editor.

The past year has been a good one for manuscripts. More have been received than we could use and our ability to be more selective has improved. But, do not let this keep you from preparing and offering your graduate program related research and position papers. We still have a very short lag between receipt and publication. All articles are reviewed by at least three members of the editorial advisory committee, thus EPISTLE qualifies as a refereed national journal. Act your self and encourage your recent graduates and present graduate students to try EPISTLE as a publication source.

Have a good Summer!

Best,

Bob

Robert A. Palmatier
Chairman, PRTE

Volume 5, No. 3 Summer 1978

EPISTLE

The Publication Forum of
Professors of Reading Teacher Educators
A Special Interest Group of the
International Reading Association

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A SUMMER READING METHODS PRACTICUM THAT WORKS

Marilyn A. Colvin
and
Douglas A. Tomas

Providing a meaningful practicum for undergraduate teacher education majors is not a simple task, especially when they study reading methods during a six-week summer school term. During the regular school year, field experience is usually gained through cooperation with local public school districts. Placed in classrooms and working with both public school and university supervisors, students can achieve competence in a variety of instructional as well as managerial strategies. But with this field-based source unavailable during the summer months, other types of experience must be substituted. An on-campus one-to-one tutoring program is an alternative approach to field experience. Rather than sending education majors to the public schools, a summer tutoring program can bring elementary students to the university campus.

An undergraduate reading methods course taught during the summer can effectively combine the achievement of knowledge and performance competencies using a tutorial program. Planning such a program, however, requires attending to the following: identifying and assessing achievement of cognitive and performance objectives, obtaining the children, matching the students and children, developing the tutoring program, and writing the tutorial report.

Identifying and Assessing Achivement of Cognitive and Performance Objectives

In keeping with the philosophy of competency based teacher education at the University of Houston, instructional objectives, defined in terms of cognition and performance, were selected from a list of objectives used in the regular field based undergraduate program. To aid students in the accomplishment of the cognitive objectives, daily seminars were held with the professor for the first hour of the two hour block allotted to the reading methods course. Format of the seminars varied and included formal lectures, demonstrations, and group discussions and activities. Pencil-and-paper post tests provided the means of assessing the achievement of cognitive objectives.

The final hour of the day was spent in a one-to-one tutoring session which began immediately following the seminars. An opportunity to practice and develop appropriate instructional strategies was thereby provided.

Obtaining the Children

To announce the availability of the tutoring program, an information letter was sent to the principals of local elementary schools. The program was promoted as an asset to both university and public school instructional programs and students. Included in the letter were dates, times, and costs (16 hour sessions for $50.00), and an address/phone number for applications. Principals were requested to share the letter with their faculties who, in turn, contacted parents of individual students needing remediation in reading. Parents were provided a school referral form which was to be completed by the child's teacher and which requested specific information about the child's reading strengths and weaknesses. Parents were also informed that the number of tutoring slots would depend on student enrollment in the methods course which would not be finalized until the second or third day of class. Therefore, applications were placed on a list in the order received. Final notification was made by phone. Parents were responsible for transportation. A total of forty children were finally enrolled in the tutoring program.

Matching Students and Children

In most cases, students and children were matched according to the expressed grade preference of the tutor (primary or intermediate). The goal was to provide experience at the level on which the tutor would later be student teaching. The specific needs of the children as identified by the parents and teachers were a second consideration. In some instances, individual children were assigned two tutors who coordinated production of materials and instruction.

The Tutoring Program

Teacher training took priority in the summer tutoring program although service to the community in the form of supervised tutoring became a secondary goal. In order to provide education majors with experience in several areas of reading instruction and at the same time to meet the diverse needs of the children, a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to reading instruction based upon the course text (Guszak, 1972) was implemented. Skill weaknesses in word attack, comprehension, and fluency were noted and recorded on check sheets kept for each child based on daily informal

reading inventories. From these cumulative check sheets, objectives and instructional strategies were developed and implemented by students.

Proper balance between connected reading and skill development was maintained through lesson plans which included daily activities in oral reading, silent reading, word, recognition, comprehension, and games or activities for reinforcement of skills and enjoyment. Behavioral objectives, materials, procedures, and evaluations were required components of all lesson plans. The following is a sample listening comprehension activity:

Behavioral Objective: After listening to a story on level, the child will correctly sequence 5 pictures depicting the events of the story.

Materials: "Wheelie and the Chopper," Rand McNally; 5 prepared pictures.

Procedures: After discussing the story title/pictures and the need for remembering the main events, the child listens to the story. The tutor places scrambled pictures in front of the child. The child sequences the pictures.

Evaluation: 100% accuracy. The child worked very quickly and without hesitation--no problems with sequencing.

An appropriate tutoring atmosphere in terms of physical environment and child-tutor relationship was stressed throughout the program. An informal, relaxed environment was deemed best to meet the needs of both the student and the child. Each pair chose an area to work in within the space allotted (2 large rooms and 5 small rooms). Children soon felt at home as personalized charts, pictures, language experience stories, and other personal items began appearing there.

In order to strengthen both the tutoring program and the teacher-training program, supervision and consultation were provided daily by the professor and a graduate teaching assistant. Supervisors moved freely through the areas, unobtrusively observing lessons and making written comments on lesson plans and check sheets.

Tutors were encouraged to watch their children for symptoms of possible weakness in hearing, vision, or speech. In cases where weaknesses or problems were observed, referral was made to the University of Houston Diagnostic Learning Center for diagnostic screening. Of the forty children, seven were referred for screening.

Instructional materials were obtained from a variety of sources. In cooperation with the Diagnostic Learning Center, the center's materials room was made available to the tutors. Other sources included the instructional materials center located in the College of Education, and the textbook and juvenile collection of the college library. Tutors were encouraged to develop materials of their own focusing on the particular needs of their children. Directions for constructing inexpensive, but durable, pocket chart were provided early in the program. Presentations of teacher-made materials were also made along with demonstrations of how to use selected equipment and materials owned by the Diagnostic Learning Center.

The Tutorial Report

At the conclusion of the tutoring program, a summary report was prepared by the student, critiqued by the professor, and provided to the parents. A cover letter encouraged them to share this information with the child's new classroom teacher in the fall. Independent and instructional levels were identified for listening and reading comprehension. In addition, each report summarized the specific skills which were taught and noted student progress. Finally, activities which proved motivational were discussed, and a list of selections and materials used with each child during the program was included.

In judging the success of the summer reading methods program two factors need consideration. Although a tutoring program such as the one described has inherent weaknesses in terms of ability to facilitate the development and assessment of those performance objectives related to the teaching of reading, the fact that all forty teacher education majors achieved at least minimum competency of both cognitive and performance objectives supports the conclusion that the practicum approach works.

Additionally, evidence of improved reading performance by children in the tutoring program was noted. Not only did improvement occur in the area of specific skills, but also in overall scores of oral and silent reading as measured by daily informal reading inventories.

A summer tutoring program is far from trouble-free, but the advantages of utilizing such a plan outweigh the possible disadvantages. Tutors and children alike profit from the personalized learning situation afforded by a one-to-one tutoring program. The end result is unquestionably a reading methods practicum that works.

REFERENCE

Guszak, J. Diagnostic Reading Instruction in the Elementary School. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972.

Dr. Wilson is a member of the education faculty at the University of West Florida in Pensacola. In studying accountability he has looked at the bases for student evaluations of professors.

HOW STUDENTS RATE THEIR READING INSTRUCTORS

Richard C. Wilson

Separating good teachers from poor teachers is not an easy task. Artley (1975) reported the difficulty of isolating specific behaviors that tell clearly who are the best reading teachers. At a given time, sagging hose or an unshaven face may have greater influence on a student's evaluation of his instructor than the teaching performance he is requested to measure.

Attitudes about teachers rather than accessible performance, one author speculates, often play the greater role in teacher evaluations (Johnson, 1976). Instruments used to measure compentence may in reality reflect attitudes.

Interest in the criteria often used to evaluate college and university reading instructors prompted a study to determine the comparative importance under graduate and graduate reading students hold for selected personal and professional traits, talents and characteristics frequently included in the evaluation of teaching personnel. The survey-study was conducted at The University of West Florida during 1976 and 1977. Five universities in Florida, Georgia and Alabama took part in the project.

Collecting the Data

Questionnaires listing eighteen personal and professional traits, talents and characteristics of reading instructors selected for use in this study were distributed in graduate and undergraduate reading education classes at each cooperating institution. Students were requested to mark each item on a one-to-five scale.

One hundred and sixty-three questionnaires were returned. The replies included 84 undergraduate students and 79 graduate students. The responses were tallied and averaged to obtain an index that would indicate the relative value placed upon each one of the eighteen entries. Each of the items included in the survey is shown in the accompanying table with the undergraduate student rating, the graduate student rating and the combined rating for that entry.

The Findings

The highest ratings, as shown on the table, were given to teaching functions or entries most closely associated with the act or art of teaching. Students rated nine of the eighteen items very important to essential for reading instructors. These were items 3 through 8, 17 and 18. Included in this grouping are measures of sense of humor, respect of students, demonstrations with live subjects, work experience, criteria used for grading, course requirements, professional knowledge and human relationships. Except for one entry, graduate students and undergraduates alike differed only slightly in their ratings of these nine entries.

Graduate and undergraduate students differed most over the importance they attach to having a sense of humor. Undergraduates apparently attach more importance to having a sense of humor than do graduate students. The table contrasts ratings of 3.4 to 4.2 for graduate students and undergraduate students respectively on this quality which is item number three.

Three of the four lowest rated items, interestingly enough, were given to those entries that are the simplest to measure, i.e., numbers nine, thirteen, and fourteen in the table. Writing books and publishing, easily tallied, and assessible quantities, stand out as low priority qualities. It is worthy of note, however, that graduate students rated each of these easily accessible items higher than undergraduate students. Being an author is more important in the view of graduate students than in the view of undergraduate students according to this study.

Though ranked relatively low by the total group, having a national reputation as an authority in the field was considered much more important by graduate students than by undergraduates. This is reflected in respective ratings of 3.4 and 2.9 shown as item two in the table.

The other five items were rated from good to very important. Three of the five, numbers one, ten, twelve, fifteen, and sixteen in the table, are difficult to measure attitudes. Being active in professional work and research activities have measureable products but the efforts may be somewhat too elusive for assessment. Graduate students and undergraduate students differed very little in the importance they associated with all five of these qualities.

The personal and professional qualities receiving the two highest ratings were items 6, "has actual work experience at the educational levels covered in the course", and 4, "has respect of students without being condescending, pedantic and academically aloof." Number 4 requires an attitudinal response whereas number 6 is a more accessible item.

Of probable interest to some reading instructors are several voluntary comments offered by these students. "Demonstrates rapport with professors from other disciplines in which reading students are enrolled," was considered important to one. Another gave high marks to instructors who are "not threatened by intellectually active minds."

Keeping up-to-date, sharing information about reading conferences, limiting reprimands to private sessions and having "a genuine concern and caring for students" were included in the list of voluntary insertions. These remarks reflect the high importance most students attach to personal traits and values that are difficult to evaluate in terms of objective, accessible data.

Conclusions

It may be shown from this survey-study that opinionated and attitudinal factors play an important role in student evaluations of their reading professors. Most attempts at evaluating, however, purport to measure performance. It may, therefore, be concluded that "what you get" in student evaluations may not be "what you want."

Most of the qualities rated high in the study are, paradoxically, the most difficult to measure. For example, all respondents considered "relating well to students on a one-to-one basis" to be very important. Yet this ability eludes definitive measurement because the instructor may be viewed as relating well to some students while appearing aloof and condescending to others.

Such easy to tabulate items as publications, positions held in professional organizations, and published research activities seem to elicit lower ratings from students, but this should not imply that students have any antipathy toward these activities. Individual comments affirm their admiration for instructors who do more than teach by making tangible contributions to their professional fields.

Highest ratings are reported for those basic personal and human qualities that are associated not only with good teaching but with practically all social and professional interactions. Greatest esteem was held for those instructors with the highest human and personal qualities and who also have a record of scholarly activities involving leadership roles, publications, funded research, and distinguished service.

The findings may serve to alert reading instructors to some of the activities and behaviors most highly regarded by their students. This information, of course, may be used as the basis for personal and professional improvement. On the other hand, it may also provide data for behavior modification to seek administrative favor.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES OF READING INSTRUCTORS

5 - Essential, extremely important
4 - Very important but not crucial
3 - Good but not necessary
2 - Minor importance
1 - No significance at all
U - Undergraduates
G - Graduates

		U	G	All
1.	Active in professional organizations (Has held important offices in local, state and national reading associations).	3.3	3.4	3.3
2.	Has a national reputation as an authority in some area of reading.	2.9	3.4	3.1
3.	Has a good sense of humor.	4.2	3.5	4.1
4.	Has respect of students without being condescending, pedantic and academically aloof.	4.7	4.7	4.7
5.	Illustrates some reading processes by giving demonstrations with live subjects (via video tape, etc.)	4.2	4.2	4.2
6.	Has had actual work experience at the educational levels covered in the course.	4.7	4.6	4.7
7.	Uses objective criteria for grading.	4.2	4.2	4.2
8.	Requires maximum efforts and involvement for better than average grades.	4.0	4.0	4.0
9.	Published/authored articles in national reading journals.	2.8	3.3	3.1
10.	Encourages individual and group contact in social situations.	3.9	3.5	3.7
11.	Generally sticks to pertinent topics except in unusual circumstances.	4.1	4.0	4.0
12.	Is prompt in beginning and ending classes.	3.7	3.6	3.6
13.	Has written a book.	2.2	2.5	2.4
14.	Published in local and state reading bulletins, monographs and journals.	2.5	2.9	2.7

		U	G	All
15.	Is active in research activites.	3.4	3.4	3.4
16.	Intellectually superior person.	3.5	3.8	3.7
17.	Has a great breadth and depth in knowledge of the field of reading.	4.6	4.6	4.6
18.	Relates well to students on a one-to-one basis.	4.6	4.5	4.5

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2. Johnson, Henry C. Jr. "Court, Craft, and Competence: A Reexamination of Teacher Evaluation Procedures." Phi Delta Kappan, May, 1976.

Dr. Toback works as an Area Reading Consultant in the Madison (Wisconsin) Public Schools. His other interests include reading skills for the gifted and talented, development of a motivational inventory scale, and secondary reading.

SURVIVING SCHOOL POLITICS

Adam S. Toback

The typical college curriculum in reading offers graduate students a wide variety of course work in reading and related disciplines. Students come away with a broad background of experience in reading and with an eagerness to develop what they feel is an ideal reading program. Somewhere between leaving graduate school and their first year on the job, many loose their idealism and their enthusiasm for the job at hand. Why? What probably has happened is that some form of politicking has blunted the effectiveness of their program and left them feeling discouraged.

Politicking is a force that is recognized in other fields of endeavor - especially business. However, education seems to think that it is immune to this type of behavior. The sad truth of the matter is - that it is not.

Politicking is a concept that graduate schools may not agree with; however, reality suggests that we at least approach this subject in some fashion and help the graduate student to recognize the basic forms of politicking. Graduate schools, omitting training in this area, tend to leave graduates unprepared for the real state of affairs. Understanding the game of politics is now essential for survival, as well as for being able to get things done. This is especially true for anyone who intends to work as a reading consultant.

School politics are a fact of life. It may be your feelings that you are above this kind of game playing and you want nothing to do with it; but there are times when you have no choice but to become involved. The nature of the reading consultant's role places him in a visible and vulnerable position. He or she has little choice but to accept the fact that he or she will be enmeshed in school politics at some time.

There are a number of reasons why the reading consultant is vulnerable to school politics. A reading consultant is generally defined as a person who is freed of classroom responsibility to work with staff members. He or she is in the service business, dealing with staff members, where success is not always easy to measure. Some staff members see this as a soft job that has a lot of free time. "He's not teaching kids, so what's he doing?" Thus, this may be one reason why people politic against the reading consultant.

If a reading consultant is to work with administrators and teachers, there are bound to be some personality conflicts along the way. These conflicts become intensified and are a hidden source of trouble in that some teachers see the consultant as a threat to their own security. They may view him as a person who makes judgements about their teaching.

As a reading consultant you are expected to be creative and knowledgeable about curriculum and able to make suggestions about courses, methods, and the types of materials to be used. Some people see this as a means of taking away their influence in the decision making process for curriculum development.

Other reasons may or may not have anything to do with your role as a reading consultant. You may be supporting a group or staff members in developing a new approach in teaching a course only to find yourself caught in the cross fire between teachers and parents who are against it. There are those who will take credit for some of your ideas or try to stick the blame for their failure on you. There are those who would like to do away with your role for they fear you are out to change their way of teaching. These are but a few of the reasons why people may politick against you. More frequently than not you are the last one to find out when trouble is brewing, thus, forcing you into a defensive position. In such cases, you become involved without even knowing it.

The following forms of politicking are the most frequently used. They are explained along with suggestions on how to counter them.

The Brown Noser: This individual is easy enough to spot. He's the one who is always trying to flatter the principal and other administrators. This situation usually works itself out even though you can not hasten the process. Sooner or later he will overdo his flattery to the point that no one will take him seriously. Eventually, the principal will see this individual for what he is. This should not prevent you from learning the art of complimenting. It is the over exaggerated or untimely compliment that hurts you.

Napoleon: This individual will seek to take power away from you. He does this in such a slow and gradual fashion that you are unaware of it until it is too late. For example, he starts to offer to do tasks that you would rather not do and he makes it a point to leave you in his debt. If he cannot take power from you he may try to send you to oblivion by taking over your physical territory. He'll share some space to give you an office only to have you find it is hidden out of view. "Out of sight, out of mind." Or you may have a small room used for storage, but there is enough room to have a few desks put in. He says he has a few kids who would like to do some tutoring and could they use that small space for a while? After a while, guess who gets credit for starting a tutoring program, who gets the whole room and is the principal's fair haired

boy? Now ask yourself, "who's job is he doing, and who's room does he have?"

Frequently, Napoleon makes his move while you're new at the school; you lack an understanding of the school's power structure, you are unaware of hidden agendas that some staff members may have and generally you are groping to find out how things function in the school. The best defense against this is to ask yourself; What is it that I'm asking someone else to do for me? How does it fit into my job? What will happen to my role if I lose it? The next thing to do is to find one or two persons you can trust and ask what is the power structure of the school. Listen to gossip for it gives you a feeling of what is going on and it identifies the power groups of the school. Talk with all of the individuals in key positions (department heads, assistant principals, curriculum directors, etc.) to see where they stand on issues about reading. At this point you are in a better position to make judgements about individual motives.

The Verbalizer: This person uses gossip and rumors to blunt your effectiveness in working with staff members and administrators. Keep this in mind, the effective principal will consider it a sign of weakness if you continually run to him to complain about a staff member. However, if the gossip is damaging to your professional reputation you must act fast.

1. Keep cool and think things through.
2. Document your case.
3. Have it out with that individual.
4. If the problem is not resolved, proceed to the principal.

This last step has to be done. Never assume things will get better or will pass over. Remember your reputation is on the line. You have to defend yourself. It is important that you do not get carried away with your anger or resentment toward that person. It is a rare gift to be able to show anger, not lose your temper, and still get your point across. Once the situation is presented to the principal and the Verbalizer is at your feet, do not crucify him. If your retaliation is too great, other staff members will develop sympathy pains for him. "Yeah, The Verbalizer used poor judgement, but the punishment was too severe." Better to have the staff members enhance your reputation by saying "He got a raw deal from The Verbalizer, but he's willing to forget it and start from scratch."

The Snatcher: This is the individual who tries to steal credit from you. People have been known to take ideas of other individuals and pass them off as their own. When you find this happening to you, it's a matter of keeping your cool and think things through before you deal with this person. Defend yourself by putting your ideas in writing and circulate them to appropriate staff members and administrators.

Keep alert for the Snatcher's cousin, the Sticker. He is the person who loves to make any project failure appear as your sole responsibility even if he was part of the project. The defense again is the same, put in a memo that success of the new project might not appear for several reasons then list the reasons involved. Be sure to do this in advance of the project and send copies to the appropriate people.

The Writer: This individual writes memos to the principal and other administrators at the drop of a hat. Very frequently he writes a memo to you stating how he feels you are approaching this project in the wrong manner. He also sends a blind copy to the principal as well. The only logical reason for the Writer sending tons of memos is to trap individuals or to ingratiate the sender to the higher up administrators.

Here are some examples of memos sent to the principal by the Writer:

1. Writes a memo to the principal taking credit for your ideas.
2. Writes "For the record memo" in case a project fails he can say he advised you of the error and makes you the scapegoat.
3. Writes memos as a vehicle for complaining about individuals.
4. Writes a memo to tell you what a good job you're doing; it's usually for Brownie Points.
5. Writes a memo to make himself appear as if he's doing one whale of a job.

The Changer: This individual is usually the administrator or the dubious administrative assistant who wishes to change your role. He may do it by slowly referring students to you, expecting you to work with these students, 'after all you are in reading.' He sees you as a means of dealing with problem students rather than working with staff members. He may view reading problems in an isolated atmosphere rather than developing a total school reading program.

Working with this individual is difficult and you must try to educate him, if possible, by writing position papers on working with staff members versus individual students, sending him articles on the effective uses of the reading consultant in working with staff members, and informing him of successful reading programs. Last but not least, stick to your guns and remind him repeatedly of your job description. Above all be diplomatic with your superiors. When all else fails, learn to compromise.

In trying to survive school politics, individuals sometimes accuse the principal of playing the politicking game more than his subordinates. There will be times when you disagree with your principal when he makes a decision. If you disagree with the decision, be aware that you may not know all the facts

he has at his disposal. Therefore, it is to your advantage to try to develop a principal's point of view. By understanding his point, you will soon learn how he perceives things and it may give you insights as to how he comes to his decisions.

There are basically three points to ponder when dealing with the principal or any other administrator.

1. The competent principal has a larger grasp of the total school operations than other members of the staff and administration. (This point should be foremost in your mind.)

Speculating on how the Principal views things allows you to knowledgeably plan your strategy and help you avoid putting your foot into your mouth by arguing in circles. Remember, he has facts you may not be aware of.

2. The competent principal is impatient with those who are not capable of accomplishing their tasks.

A principal is like a top executive. He is being paid to make decisions and becomes upset with individuals who seem to have all kinds of excuses for why they are not prepared. He does not have time to be involved in petty issues that prevent individuals from doing their jobs. Since time is valuable to the principal, it is best to have him react to your ideas instead of verbalizing or asking him for ideas. Putting your ideas in writing forces you to think through the situation and anticipate some of the problems you may encounter.

3. The competent principal is resentful of those who feel they know more than he does and continually challenge his authority.

If you feel the principal is making the wrong decision, make sure you handle it properly. Do not proceed to tell him that he is all wrong in front of everyone. No one likes this. You must do it discreetly and in such a manner as not to offend his ego. Talk to him privately or on the side. Present your ideas in such a manner that is non threatening to him. Use phrases such as "Did you consider this," "It's a good idea, but what happened if," or "Have you thought about this aspect" are all good ways of getting your point across and yet not challenge him out right.

Favorable attention is what you want and the following traits are suggested for you to develop. These suggestions are generally used by administrators who are looking for capable individuals. It also helps in developing a strong reputation for yourself.

1. <u>The ability to get along with others</u>:
This individual does not antagonize his co-workers, but establishes smooth working relationships and is generally liked by those he works with.

2. <u>The ability to be a Perceptive Planner</u>:
This individual is capable of thinking ahead rather than just reacting to situations or emergencies.

3. The ability to make decisions:
This individual is willing to take responsibility to complete the task, but fights for what he/she believes is right. He/She is not afraid to put their neck on the line and make a decision based on the information that is available.

4. The ability to be creative:
This individual is willing to experiment and generate new ideas for the task. He/She takes a great deal of satisfaction from trying to solve problem in a creative way.

5. The ability to control one's temper:
This individual can control his temper when the situations are difficult. He/She can try to resolve conflicts without running to the principal.

These five suggestions will help draw the principal's attention to your ability to work effectively in the school. It will certainly cast doubt on those who try to involve you in the politicking game by rumor or inunedo. You will have a reputation that will be hard to knock.

This message is not to say that everyone is out to get you, but to make you aware that politicking is a reality and does go on. It goes on in all schools, though in some schools it is more intense and vicious than in others. It is hoped that this article has succeeded in giving you some idea as to what to look for in the game of politics played in schools. It is also hoped that this article has presented reasonable options for you to use in defense of yourself.

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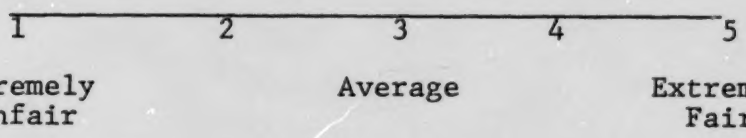
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAIRNESS AND DIFFICULTY OF EXAMINATIONS

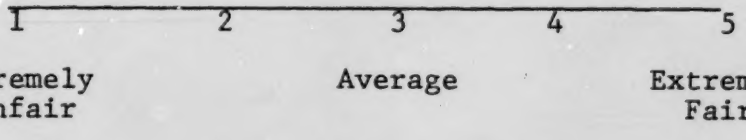
Jerry L. Johns

For the past several years I have routinely asked the students in my classes to evaluate my examinations on two dimensions: fairness and difficulty. A five-point scale was used for each of the ratings. These scales are shown below. From an informal analysis of the data collected, I concluded

TEST FAIRNESS



TEST DIFFICULTY



that my tests were a bit above average in fairness. In terms of difficulty, my tests were rated more difficult than average. Of course, these conclusions were based on a casual look at the student's responses. I began, nevertheless, to wonder about these types of questions:

1. What is the relationship between student ratings for the fairness and difficulty of my tests?

2. Are there significant differences between the mean student ratings for the fairness and difficulty of my tests?

3. Do students' evaluations of my tests vary depending on when they complete the ratings? Specifically, are there significant differences between ratings that are received immediately after taking the test and ratings that are received after the test has been graded and returned?

During the summer of 1977 I taught two sections of "The Improvement of Reading in the Elementary School", an advanced

course in the teaching of developmental reading at the elementary level. Since a comprehensive final examination is used in this course, I decided to design a small study to answer the three questions posed above. The students were randomly assigned to two groups. One group evaluated the fairness and difficulty of the test immediately after the test. The other group evaluated the same two aspects of the test after the tests had been graded (grades ranged from A to F) and returned. Each group was made up of 23 students, most of whom were graduate students.

For the first question I wanted to determine the relationship between the fairness and difficulty of the test. The Pearson r was .35 for those who rated the test immediately after they took it. For those who rated the test after they saw their grades, the correlation coefficient was .57. The two correlations were changed into Fisher's Z-statistic to test the null hypothesis of no difference between these two correlation coefficients. There was no significant difference between the two Z-statistics. I concluded that there was no significant difference between the two correlation coefficients.

The second question dealt with the significance of the ratings for fairness and difficulty. The Table contains the relevant data. Significant differences existed between test fairness and test difficulty for each group. My test was rated as fairer than the "average" test and more difficult than the "average" test. It seems reasonable to conclude that students differentiated between the fairness and difficulty of my test.

Table

t Tests for Test Fairness and Test Difficulty

When Rated	N	Mean Fairness	Mean Difficulty	t
Immediately After Test	23	3.35	2.04	6.14*
After Grade Received	23	4.00	2.22	10.06*

*p < .001

The third question dealt with whether there would be significant differences in fairness and difficulty ratings

depending on when the test was rated. The above table contains the means that were tested for significance. A t-test was conducted for test fairness and test difficulty between the two groups of students. For test fairness, a t value of 5.78 was obtained. This value was significant at the .05 level of confidence. My test was rated higher in "fairness" after it was returned to the students. For test difficulty, a t-value of .68 was obtained. This difference was not significant. There were no significant differences in the difficulty of the test when it was rated immediately after the test or when students knew their grades.

It seems to me that the data obtained in this study should enable interested professionals to make similar comparisons with their classes and conduct similar studies of this nature. I think additional studies could provide professionals with profiles of how students perceive the fairness and difficulty of a test. Even though my test was difficult, it was rated as quite fair. If the test was rated quite difficult and quite unfair, I think the natural implication would be to examine the content of the test and try to determine why students see it as unfair. Other combinations of "fairness" and "difficulty" scores should suggest natural avenues for exploration.

Perhaps one of the most interesting areas to explore is the relationship between a student's grade on a test and his rating of the fairness and the difficulty of the test. The design for such a study would be very similar to that reported in this article. The major addition would be the inclusion of a method for linking a student's ratings to his grade. My study assured student anonymity so analysis of this nature was not possible. I think, nevertheless, that it may be very instructive to carry out a study where both grades and ratings are considered. The results could be very interesting.

Although this study has been concerned with the ratings of tests, the rating of instructor effectiveness and overall course quality could also be examined. On more than one occasion, I have wondered what impact the student's final grade has on his evaluation of the quality of the course and the effectiveness of my teaching. Are there differences depending on whether or not the student knows his final grade for the course? That's a question I hope to explore in the future.